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House Judiciary Committee

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Testimony on Behalf of the Michigan Association of Substance Abuse Coordinating Agencies (MASACA)

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Robin Reynolds, I am providing input on behalf of the Michigan Association of Substance Abuse Coordinating Agencies (MASACA). I am also the Director of the Mid-South Coordinating Agency and a member of the Michigan Methamphetamine Task Force. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

MASACA fully supports House Bill 4322 and Senate Bill 189, which will amend PA 368 of 1978, and entitled "Public Health Code".

The substance abuse system recognizes the dangerous affects of methamphetamine production and use. The environmental consequences of the production of methamphetamine are wide- spread. The stressors placed on our law enforcement community are paramount. However, the consequences to those affected by methamphetamine addiction are even greater. This includes the individuals addicted to this illicit drug as well as the effects, both emotionally and physically, on the families and children.

The number of individuals addicted to methamphetamine continues to grow. he number of publicly funded treatment admissions for primary, secondary or tertiary methamphetamine abuse has increased from **314 in 2000 to 1341 in 2004**. In the Mid-South region, the treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse have risen from 40 admissions in 2000 to 217 in 2004.

Limiting the sale of Pseudoephedrine (the precursor to the manufacturer of meth) will not eliminate abuse of methamphetamine. However, we believe it will limit the availability of the drug. The outcome of this legislation will be fewer addicted individuals and fewer families devastated by the affects of this dangerous, illicit drug.

The hazardous physical effects of methamphetamine use include malnutrition, amphetamine psychosis, aggressive behavior, cardiac arrhythmia, stroke, convulsions and death. The drug itself is a neurological agent that can result in significant psychological conditions in adults using the drug.

Use of methamphetamine is also associated with high-risk sexual behaviors, which results in an increase of sexually transmitted diseases. Compared to cocaine abusers, methamphetamine users are 2.9 times more likely to contract HIV.

Also chief among our concerns is the health and well being of the children associated with methamphetamine production. Approximately 1/3 of the methamphetamine labs investigated by law enforcement involve children. In addition, there have been instances of families unknowingly moving into a building that had previously been a methamphetamine lab. Significant lung problems were diagnosed in children who have been exposed to the environmental effects of a clandestine lab. These concerns include exposure to levels of chemicals that may cause severe and long-lasting health issues. In addition, the trauma for children associated with the seizure of methamphetamine labs is of concern. A child unable to take his or her favorite toy or object from the house when they are removed from the home and separated from their parent may suffer insurmountable trauma.

Some good news is that prevention efforts are now occurring across the state. In the Mid-South region, we now have ten counties implementing efforts around preventing the use and abuse of methamphetamine. Other counties throughout Michigan are implementing similar prevention campaigns.

Treatment efforts and best practice guidelines are also being addressed through out Michigan. Methamphetamine dependence is difficult to treat, but not impossible. Results are similar to treatment of cocaine and heroin addiction. Cognitive and emotional impairments are common among methamphetamine users. Individuals addicted to methamphetamine often require medically supervised residential stabilization and short-term use of medications to reduce paranoia, psychosis, agitation, and depression.

We have found "Contingency Management Treatment" to be highly effective in treating individuals addicted to methamphetamines. Drug courts, in collaboration with treatment professionals who combine sanctions and incentives into the treatment process, have been highly effective in treating individuals addicted to methamphetamines.

Through effective collaboration among drug manufacturers, retailers, law enforcement, public health agencies, courts, child welfare agencies, and the substance abuse system we can make an impact on the growing methamphetamine epidemic in Michigan. However, legislation aimed at combating the production of methamphetamine is a necessary component to produce effective and lasting outcomes to ensure the well being of the individual and families in Michigan.

I hope my remarks have persuaded you that it is critical for the good health and safety of our state and local communities to pass these bills. Should you require further information, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

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